
Advice on Voting

When you vote, please rely on your professional judgement: If you think banking time will help improve student achievement at your school in 2009-10 vote **yes**. If not, vote **no**.

Report Cards Now?

For schools on the traditional 191-day calendar, report cards are due on record day, June 17. Teachers in a few schools have been asked to turn them in much earlier.

The longstanding agreement on record day is:

"Elementary teachers will turn in records as they complete them at various times on record day. Records will be completed and checked for accuracy and completeness previous to the teachers being excused for the day. The teacher will continue to be responsible for the closing of the assigned classroom. If it becomes obvious to the local administrator after the beginning of the afternoon session that records may not be completed previous to the end of the normal teacher workday, the principal may establish a schedule for said completion.

"Staff members without classroom responsibilities may be assigned such duties so as to assist in the regular closing of schools following the completion of their own responsibilities. It is understood that staff members without classroom responsibilities will not be required to check the accuracy and completeness of other teachers' records."

Banking Time Vote for 2009-10

With today's Sharpener, MTEA Building Representatives received materials on conducting the teacher vote on the question: "Do you want our school to do banking time in 2009-10?" We asked BRs to distribute Sharpener as soon as it arrived at your school, to give you the opportunity to review it before voting.

We recommend that BRs conduct the banking time vote on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday - June 8, 9, and 10.

BRs should send the special sheet for reporting each school's results to the MTEA Building as soon as voting is completed, but no later than **Friday, June 12**.

Banking Time Defined by Contract

The MBSD/MTEA contract allows teachers to annually decide whether or not to request a modification of the teaching day at their school to do banking time the following year. With banking time, the day includes about 10 more minutes of student instructional time and about 10 minutes less for "teacher preparation/special help supervision or team planning time."

If a majority of teachers at a school vote to modify their day, the time they bank is used for "activities leading to improved academic achievements." By contract, the next school year would include five days without students for these activities.

Inside Sharpener - Banking Time Details

Information to consider **before voting** on banking time is outlined below:

Page 2 - Banking Time: Q & A

The "Banking Time Q & A" addresses how banking days should be planned and used, why a majority vote is required, etc. For a more extensive Q & A that includes specific voter eligibility questions, go to mtea.org (Contract> Teachers> Contract A to Z).

Page 3 - Make-up Days

How banking days might be impacted if there are snow days next school year, including new information on DPI waivers, is explained.

Page 4 - No Calendar Agreement

For the first time since the mid-90's when banking days became the choice of most schools, you are asked to vote without knowing the next school year's calendar.

Page 3 - Without Banking Time

The teacher day in a school without banking time is described, along with a sample schedule.



Banking Time: Questions & Answers

I - Contract Basics

Q. What is banking time?

A. The basic concept of banking time is to set aside a block of time, without students, for teacher planning/preparation, staff planning, and staff development.

Q. How is the time banked?

A. The time is banked by increasing the instructional time about 10 minutes each pupil day during the school year. The additional instructional time comes from "teacher preparation/special help supervision or team planning."

Q. Does banking time extend the workday?

A. No. The length of the teacher workday is **not** increased under banking time.

II - Using the Banked Time

Q. How should banking days be used?

A. The contract provides that the five days "...will be used for activities leading to improved academic achievements (e.g., staff planning, staff development, and teacher preparation/planning)."

Q. Who should decide the use of banking days?

A. The teachers and principal should collaboratively plan all banking time activities for the **entire** day. The activities are most effective when the faculty and principal work together.

Q. If the entire day should be collaboratively planned, why do some principals insist that they plan half of the day and the teachers plan the other half?

A. Unfortunately, some principals do not take a collaborative approach to planning.

Q. Does the contract address situations where planning is not done jointly?

Yes. The contract states: "The teachers on the staff shall determine the use of at least half of each release block and may decide that such time will be available for individual preparation/planning."

This guarantees that at least half of each day is for individual preparation/planning - unless a majority of the teachers at a school vote to do another activity.

Q. Can the principal hold staff meetings during banking day released time?

A. No. The time is **not** for staff meetings.

Q. What if banking time is not properly used in a school?

A. The BR, along with the Building Committee, should promptly meet with the principal and insist on following the contract. If that does not work, the BR should call an MTEA staff member for assistance.

If further steps do not produce satisfactory changes within the school year, teachers may decide to vote against banking time for the next school year.

III - Voting on Banking Time

Q. What is the minimum vote required for a school to do banking time?

A. By contract, to do banking time at a school, at least 50% plus one of the teachers on the staff must vote in favor of banking time.

Q. Why is a majority of teachers required?

A. The underlying principle is that the teacher contract should be modified only if **at least** the majority of teachers at a school vote in favor of changing their day.

Q. What if some teachers do not vote?

A. To do banking time, a simple majority of the teachers at a school - 50% plus one - is needed. **Not voting is tantamount to voting no.**

For example, suppose there are 35 teachers on your faculty. To modify the teacher day, at least 18 teachers must vote for banking time. If 17 teachers vote yes, 13 vote no, and 5 do not vote, your school would not bank time next school year.

Q. Who is eligible to vote on banking time?

A. All teachers permanently assigned to your school are eligible to vote.

Q. What if the BR does not conduct a vote on banking time for next school year?

A. If teachers do not vote for banking time, the school will not bank time next school year.





DPI Hours Requirement Also a Consideration

The information to the right addresses only the DPI-mandated number of student instruction **days**. Schools are also required to provide a minimum number of instructional **hours**.

The hours requirement is a bit more complicated. To start with, there are different minimums:

- ◆ 1050 hours for grades 1-6.
- ◆ 1137 hours for grades 7-12.

DPI uses the highest grade level within a school to determine which minimum applies. For example, K-8 and K-12 schools have the 1137 hours requirement.

For more details on DPI hour and day requirements, go to mtea.org.

The Teacher Workday Without Banking Time

In schools that do not vote for banking time:

- ◆ Teachers have about 10 minutes **more** for "preparation/special help supervision or team planning."
- ◆ Each day, there are about 10 fewer minutes of instruction.
- ◆ The length of the teacher day does not change.
- ◆ The school has 180 student days (instead of 175 student days and 5 banking days).

Below is an example from the [1992-93 MPS Elementary Schools Resource Guide](#):

Teacher Day

7:55 a.m. – 2:45 p.m.

7:55 a.m. – 8:10 a.m.
Special Help and Preparation

2:40 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.
Special Help and Preparation

Pupil Day

8:10 a.m. – 2:40 p.m.

Banking Days and Make-Up Days

Introduction

The analysis below is provided so that you have up-to-date information as you vote on banking time for your school in 2009-10. The possibility of make-up days is just one factor to consider.

Again, our advice is to vote based on whether or not you think banking time will improve teaching and learning at your school.

The Recent Past

Last school year, DPI denied the district's request for a waiver of the required days and hours of student instruction after MPS schools were closed for three days due to inclement weather, a.k.a. snow days. Most schools made up the days by using the emergency make-up day as the record day, and converting the scheduled record day and two banking days to student instruction days.

Last summer, MTEA and school board representatives bargained a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to provide an orderly sequence of make-up days in the event of snow days in 2008-09. With three snow days again this school year, last year's pattern of make-up days is being followed - two banking days and the emergency make-up day.

Update on DPI Waivers

This April, DPI added information to its Web site on the Q & A on required days/hours of student instruction. The DPI Q & A now explains how a school district may request a waiver of an instructional day for the purpose of conducting a professional development day. (Go to mtea.org for a link.)

If MPS requests and DPI approves a waiver for five professional days, make-up days would **not** be required for up to five snow days.

What We Know Now

DPI denied MPS waiver requests **for snow closings** in 2007-08 and 2008-09. To retain banking days but avoid make-up days, MPS needs to follow the DPI's waiver request steps for professional days.

If not, make-up days will be necessary at schools on banking time for snow closings in the future. And converting banking days to student days will continue to be the least disruptive approach.

DPI requires waiver requests for professional days **in advance**, not after the fact when snow closing days occur. MPS has not requested a districtwide waiver for banking days in the past.

What We Don't Know

Because in the past, MPS has sought DPI waivers for snow days, **not** for banking days, we don't know:

- ◆ If MPS will request a waiver for next school year.
- ◆ If DPI would approve the MPS request.

The Possibility of Make-Up Days Remains

Based on what is known today, it is possible that make-up days will be required for schools on banking time next year.

Schools with 180 student days (**no banking days**) will not have to make-up days unless there are six or more snow days in 2009-10.



Calendar and Contract Bargaining Updates

Please sign up for "breaking news" (if any) e-mail updates on calendar and contract bargaining at mtea.org.

For example, as [Sharpener](#) went to press, a bargaining session on the calendar was scheduled for that same day, Friday, May 29. If there were significant developments, you would have received an e-mail update before you saw [Sharpener](#).


We prefer home e-mail, especially for the summer break and for intersessions at year-round schools.

MTEA Vice-President Runoff Election Results

The results of this May's runoff election for Vice-President are:

Rozalia Harris - 1,876

Kim Schroeder - 1,826



Rozalia will take office after the MTEA Representative Assembly meeting on June 3 - along with the other newly-elected officers and Executive Board members.

First Meeting of MTEA Representative Assembly

At the Annual Delegate Assembly meeting on May 20, the MTEA Constitution was amended to change the monthly meetings of **Building** Representatives to MTEA **Representative** Assembly meetings.

Starting on Wednesday, June 3, BR meetings will no longer be comprised almost entirely of teacher representatives. Instead, there will be proportionate representation from MTEA's four bargaining units.

The number of representatives will be the same as for the Annual Delegate Assembly - currently 323. The main difference between the composition of BR meetings and RA meetings will be the addition of 63 EA representatives and 13 substitute teacher representatives.

Calendar Not Resolved

Ordinarily, negotiators for your union and the board would have reached an agreement on next school year's calendar weeks ago.

In the past, the parties have bargained only the placement of the 191 days within the calendar - **not** changes in how the days will be used, and **not** changes in the contract itself. Calendar negotiations have been limited to the calendar.

But as part of calendar talks this spring, the school board is proposing to reduce the number of banking days from five to two. The board's insistence on bargaining a contract change as part of calendar negotiations is the major obstacle to an agreement.


Voting Without a Calendar Agreement

Ordinarily, your BR would not conduct the vote on banking time until after an agreement was reached on the calendar. You would know when the five banking days would take place in 2009-10.

To provide BRs with the time needed to conduct their school's banking time vote before the year ends, you are asked to vote by June 12.

Banking Days in Contract Talks Too

The May 13 [Sharpener](#) reported that the board's team had simply rejected teacher proposals for improving teaching and learning in MPS. The rejection came, **not** through give-and-take discussions, but as part of the board's "take-it or leave-it" package on May 5.



While talks continue and the board has somewhat modified its May 5 package, the board is proposing to change banking days (currently decided by each school's vote) to only two days **for all MPS schools**.

These Negotiations Are Unusual

Talks on the next two-year contract have been quite unique thus far. Consider this example. The superintendent announced major proposals for systemwide year-round schools and adding 30 minutes of student instruction to the elementary and K-8 teacher day **in the newspaper**.

The board's bargaining team did not present the teacher day proposal to your teacher team until six weeks later. And then the board made it a part of a take-it or leave-it package, tied to federal stimulus funding. And the package did not even include a year-round school proposal.

Extraordinary Context for Bargaining

How will MPS fare in the final state budget? How much will MPS receive in federal stimulus funds, and how can and will such funds be spent? How will the MPS budget change after state and federal funding decisions are reached? What can and will State Superintendent Burmaster mandate within the authority DPI has because MPS is a District Identified For Improvement (DIFI)? Will the advisory committee appointed by the mayor and governor in reaction to the McKinsey Report influence MPS decisions, budget and others?

Your teacher bargaining team is aware that the answers could significantly impact the outcome of contract talks.

There are no guarantees in contract bargaining, especially in this complex and extraordinary context.